

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The work of the Task Force was assisted by the expertise of its members, the Department of Education (DOE), and others. The Maine Learning Results (MLR) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) that set high standards for ALL students--an arguably revolutionary departure for public education in Maine heightened the significance of our recommendations and deliberations. With high standards, increased need and an insufficient supply of speech-language pathologists (SLPs) the challenge is critical. 17,251 students in Maine are in need of speech-language and hearing clinical services in Maine schools, and there are 322 SLPs and audiologists along with 15 aides or assistants to serve this population. In light of the severe and profound impairments of many of these students, there is a clear need for more highly qualified school-based practitioners. Our report is divided into the following categories: credentialing, recruiting candidates for career development, recruitment into the profession as school practitioners, training, retention, and recommendations. We address them here briefly *ad seriatim*.

Currently, SLPs qualify to work in the schools through two routes--licensure and certification. The former has higher standards, including more practicum hours with direct supervision and the passing of a national test.

In the challenge of recruiting students to the educational programs in the State, we encounter issues around the capacity of the programs, accessibility to them, and a general lack of awareness among young people about the nature of the profession.

Challenges to recruiting more individuals into school-based practice are many and varied. They include compensation, workload, multiple school building assignments, inadequate space and support. The positive attributes of the profession include professional satisfaction, convenient work schedule, professional growth and development, benefits, and the general appeal of the quality of life in Maine.

The efforts to retain practitioners in school-based practice mirror those encountered in recruiting them into the profession.

Our recommendations address all of these issues as follows:

1. An awareness raising campaign about the opportunities in the profession for young people.
2. Financial incentives in the form of financial aid, loan forgiveness, and innovative local school district support of further study for those who will return to the district for practice.
3. The Kennebec Valley Community College Associate Degree program for assistants should receive continued State funding and should expand to double capacity in five years.
4. The UMaine program should develop post-baccalaureate opportunities for students desiring to meet the requirements for registration as a speech-language pathology assistant.
5. The University of Maine System (UMS) should fully fund the Master's program and expand it to locate faculty and offer courses, with the use of distance learning where feasible, in both the UMaine and The University of Southern Maine (UMS).
6. The UMS should investigate the feasibility of creating a six year combined Baccalaureate and Master's degree.
7. Entry-level compensation should be set in the range of \$36,000-\$38,000, the median national range for school-based practitioners.
8. School districts should find ways to offer an annual additional stipend for those who have the ASHA Certificate of Clinical Competence.
9. School districts should explore creative ways to utilize assistants under proper supervision in order to expand services.
10. The DOE should develop innovative recruitment efforts nationally and regionally.
11. School districts, other employing venues, and the DOE should collaborate to keep practitioners in Maine, and preferably in schools.

12. Facilitate a cooperative approach to recruitment by employers pooling resources for travel and relocation expenses.
13. The DOE should work collaboratively with the Maine Hospital Association, Child Development Services, etc., to attract SLPs to the State.
14. The DOE should work in concert with the Department of Economic Development to bring SLPs to Maine to refresh the intellectual capital of the State.
15. The Maine State Board of Education should include space for speech and language practitioners as allowable for State construction subsidies.
16. The State should encourage retired practitioners to return to practice, particularly as mentors and supervisors of assistants of students completing practica.
17. The DOE should collaborate with the Maine Association on the development of an exciting webpage to improve understanding and enhance recruiting efforts.
18. The DOE should work to increase federal funding of IDEA and to eliminate the non-supplanting stipulation currently attached to these funds.
19. The DOE should work with practitioners to change regulatory guidelines for caseload maximums to reflect severity of need.
20. The DOE should adopt a single credential reflective of entry level standards set by the Board of Examiners on Speech Language Pathology and ASHA

This is a weighty agenda, but it matches the significance of the challenges we face. The promise of educating ALL Maine students to achieve the high standards of MLR and NCLB requires nothing less of us.

INTRODUCTION

LD 989 brought the "Task Force Concerning Speech Language Pathologists" into being. Its membership was established with thirteen members by a Resolve of the 121st Legislature (Appendix A). The membership includes representatives from the Department of Education (DOE), the Maine State Board of Education (MSBE), the Maine Speech-Language-Hearing Association, the Maine School Superintendents Association (MSSA), the Maine School Boards Association (MSBA), the Maine Principal's Association (MPA), the Maine Association of Directors of Special Education (MADSEC), the Chancellor's Office of the University of Maine System, the University of Maine's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and a parent of a student receiving speech language pathology services (Appendix B). Our first meeting was convened on December 4, 2003, a day after the report was supposed to be submitted, by the Director of the Legislative Council. Jim Carignan and Joan Nason were elected co-chairs. The Task Force held four subsequent full day meetings in December and January to complete our work.

The Resolve asked us to assess the shortage of Speech Language Pathologists serving in Maine's schools, K-12. The charge was to:

1. Assess the conditions influencing recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists
2. Analyze graduate training programs in terms of their capacity to provide training and to provide opportunities for professional growth.
3. Identify trends in vacancies in Maine schools, trends in the use of Medicaid funding and demographics within the profession.
4. Review License requirements, focusing on the maintenance of quality.
5. Assess the potential for appropriately trained personnel who could provide speech-language pathologist services under the supervision of certified speech-language pathologists.

This represented an expansive charge, especially since the work needed to be completed in approximately one month. Our capacity to complete our work in such a brief period was enhanced by the broad and experienced knowledge of the field that the membership of the Task Force brought to the table, as well as the gracious support provided by the DOE. We benefited from very helpful presentations from the following:

- Nancy Hall, Ph.D., Chair of the Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at UMaine,
- A current status report by David Nobel Stockford and his staff in the Division of Special Services of the DOE,
- A presentation by Betsy Dyer, CCC-SLP, a speech-language pathologist in the Bangor area,
- A report on working conditions by Sabrina Jellison, CCC-SLP a public school speech language pathologist in the Strong area, and
- Michael Towey, CCC-SLP, a speech-language pathologist from Waldo County and President of the Maine-Speech-Language-Hearing Association.

The challenge to insuring quality speech language pathology services in all Maine schools is a significant one under any circumstance, but the Maine Learning Results (MLR) and No Child Left Behind (NCLB) raise the stakes considerably. They require that ALL children achieve the high standards that these initiatives establish. This is nothing short of a revolutionary development in the history of Maine public school education. No longer can we accept the notion that some children "can't learn." We must provide, by law, the support necessary to insure that ALL students achieve the MLR and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) prescribed by NCLB. This mandate makes the role of the speech-language pathologists even more critical than it has always been.

This is especially true when we understand that the vast majority of the work of speech-language pathologists goes well beyond the common perception that it is all about articulation.

Since the initial special education legislation of the mid 1970's, the field has

grown to include language development and foundational skills related to literacy acquisition, language based learning disabilities, autism/Asperger's Syndrome, traumatic brain injury, hearing impairments and deafness, feeding/swallowing disorders (dysphagia), and augmentative/alternative communication (see Appendix C for Scope of Practice). It is important to understand that students diagnosed with even the most severe and profound disabilities are not exempted from outcome measurement and are required to be assessed and show growth towards academic benchmarks through the Maine Educational Assessment (MEA)/Personal Alternate Assessment Portfolio (PAAP) process. It is essential that the speech-language pathologist assess and develop an optimal communication system for these students to demonstrate physical, social, and academic needs and knowledge (whether they can speak or not). (Appendix D Roles and Responsibilities and LSHSS, 'What Isn't Language').

The need for more speech-language pathologists working in the schools as employees of the districts is well established, especially in the more rural districts where it is often impossible to find a qualified person to undertake the necessary work, even on a contractual basis. The most recent data available indicates that there are 9,744 students identified speech and language impaired who need therapy. In addition, there are 7,497 students who receive speech/language therapy as a related service. Taken together this represents the second largest category of special service need in the State of Maine.

To serve this expanding population of students there are 646 licensed speech-language pathologists, and 102 registered as speech-language aides and assistants (96.8% are women). In the recent ED 459 report, the Department of Education reports 322 speech-language pathologists and clinicians and 17 aides are employed by school districts. This reflects a reduction of 61 staff when compared to the previous years report. In addition, there are 254 speech-language pathologists and two aides (not full-time equivalents) working under contracts with school districts. The chart below illustrates this data.

One Year Staff Comparison Number of Speech Language Pathologists & Clinicians Maine Department Of Education ED 459 Report Report Dates: 12/18/03 & 1/29/03					
	January 2003		December 2003		One Yr Change
AGE	Female	Male	Female	Male	
18-29	55	3	36	1	↓ 21 (36 %)
30-39	85	2	75	1	↓ 11 (13 %)
40-49	152	8	127	7	↓ 26 (16 %)
50-54	47	5	45	5	↓ 2 (3 %)
55-59	17	4	15	1	↓ 5 (24 %)
60 & up	4	1	6	3	↑ 4 (55 %)
TOTALS	383		322		↓ 61 (16 %)

In order to provide some sense of the magnitude of the challenge consider the following scenario, hypothetical, but not unrealistic. If one were to assume that there are roughly 17,000 children in need of some speech-language therapy services in our schools today, and the number of employed and contracted speech-language pathologists (full-time equivalents) were 400, then the provider to child ratio is approximately 1:38. This is an unacceptable ratio given the incidence of the severe, profound, and complex needs of students. Collateral responsibilities exacerbate this problem. Further evidence of school needs is provided in the results of a 2001 survey. According to the respondents of a MSLHA survey, 42% of the respondents indicated between 1 and 3 openings for Speech Language Pathologists. More than 2/3s of the respondents reported that it was "slow" and "very slow" (several months to a year) in filling vacancies in Speech Language Pathologist positions.

It is important to note that 96.8% of the speech-language pathologists are

women, and this reflects a national phenomenon that is deeply rooted in our national history and the profession. Just as it is important to have both genders represented in the classrooms, K-16, it is highly desirable to have greater gender diversity in the profession. At the very least, we need to recognize that men are a vast untapped source of new practitioners for the future. We also must mention the dearth of minorities in the profession. This is another potential pool of practitioners that should be given attention in the interest of increasing the diversity of practitioners in the school and also tapping into hitherto largely underrepresented groups in the profession.

Further exacerbating this supply challenge is the age demographic of current practitioners in the field. In the next five years as many as 75 Speech Language-Pathologists who are currently 50 years or older may choose to retire. Currently there are 127 practitioners with 19 years of service who will be approaching retirement eligibility in the next few years. The number of Speech- Language Pathologists who will graduate from the UMaine Master's program will be between 15 and 17 per year, with approximately 50% entering professional service in Maine's schools. This accelerates and compounds the urgency of the need for more highly qualified Speech- Language Pathologists than we are currently producing in Maine.

Maine is not alone in facing the increased need with dwindling numbers in the profession. The US Department of Labor estimates that nation wide there will be 57,000 speech- language pathology openings in this decade. The American Association for Employment in Education list Speech-Language Pathology as the third profession in the educational field in the number of vacancies. Maine's situation, as indicated, shares in this squeeze between demand for services, which is growing, and the supply of speech-language pathologists, which is insufficient.

High quality is an issue with which the Task Force wants no compromise. Of special relevance to this concern is the fact that Maine has a high number of Speech-Language Pathologists providing school service under a contract for services rather than a salaried position within the school department. This is especially true in the more

rural areas. As such, they enter the school culture from the "outside." The professional quality of their service is irreproachable, but the fact that they are not part of the school system on a full-time basis compromises the seamlessness of the interface with classroom teachers. Given the challenges of the MLR and NCLB and the data available to us, we emphatically conclude that the need for Speech- Language Pathologists in Maine schools is not being met. The matter will only worsen in the future without dramatic and decisive action to turn the situation around. We need to act now.

Another word about quality is in order at this point. The Task Force resoundingly insists that its recommendations support the highest level of quality of services for ALL Maine children in the public schools. There can be no compromise or retreat from the commitment to provide the best possible services to our children. They need this to meet the high standards of MLR and NCLB and they deserve it in order to have a fair chance at a full, productive, and rewarding life.

With all of this as background, our report will address the current status of professional credentialing, training, recruiting, and retention. We will then recommend initiatives in each of these areas as appropriate.

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALING

Maine has two credentials for providing services to Speech Language Impaired children in public schools.

- Maine License as a Speech Language Pathologist issued under Maine law by the Board of Examiners on Speech Language Pathology and Audiology (BESPA) Maine Department of Business and Financial Regulation
- Certificate #293 as a Speech Language Clinician issued by the Maine Department of Education (DOE).

A speech-language pathologist with a Maine License may work in the public schools without a DOE certificate. A qualified speech-language pathologist may also have both the DOE certificate and a Maine license.

The License in Speech-Language Pathology reflects the standard for professional practice, and reflects current minimal clinical competencies and continuing education requirements.

The Certificate #293 from DOE as a Speech-Language Clinician is designed to meet the standard for “qualified provider” in federal regulations under the Individuals With Disabilities Act (IDEA).

The following chart is offered as an illustration of the professional credentialing requirements:

Credential	BESPA Licensed Speech Language Pathologist	DOE # 293 Certificate: Speech Language Clinician
Professional Education	Masters Degree (or equivalent consistent with national American Speech-Language-Hearing Association certification standards)	Masters Degree (or equivalent described by DOE)
Clinical Practicum 1. Number of Clock Hours 2. Composition of Experience 3. Supervision	Clock Hours: 375 Hours Composition: Must have a variety of different clinical experiences. Supervision: Supervised according to nationally accredited program standards.	Clock Hours: 275 Hours Composition: None specified: At least 50% with children and adolescents. Supervision: Within educational institution or cooperating program.
National Examination	Passing Score: National	None required

	Examination In Speech Language Pathology (PRAXIS)	
Supervised work experience	Supervised Clinical Fellowship Year	None required
Continuing Education	Continuing Education: 25 hrs Approved, professionally relevant every two years	Continuing Education: 6 Credits- (30 Hours) Recommended in certificate area - 5 years
Employment Settings	Schools, Hospitals, Private Practice, Rehabilitation Agencies	Public Schools
Scope of Practice Established	Yes	No
Independent Provider: Able to access/bill third parties for services.	Yes	No

Individuals, with the proper training, may work in the schools as registered Speech-Language Pathology Assistants. Registration as an assistant requires, minimally, an earned Associates Degree with specific coursework and clinical practicum with direct client contact (see below for description of program at Kennebec Valley Community College). In addition to the training, Speech-Language Pathology Assistants must be registered with the State Board of Examiners on Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology under the supervision of a Speech- Language Pathologist holding a current State license. The scope of practice for a Speech- Language Pathology Assistant is described under the Rules put forth by the Board of Examiners on Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology as determined by state law. (Appendix E).

TRAINING

There have been multiple pathways to certification as a Speech-Language Clinician, licensure as a Speech- Language Pathologist or registration as a Speech-Language Assistant. We briefly summarize them here.

1. The Master's Degree. The Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders at the UMaine provides the only Master's program in Speech-Language Pathology in the State of Maine. It holds accreditation from the American Speech-Language-Hearing Association (ASHA). The program graduates an average of 17 students per year. This is consistent with the average number of Master's graduates in the New England region (16.5 students/year) and higher than the national average (12.6 students/year). Most students fund their own education, sometimes graduating with loans ranging from \$30,000 to \$60,000. There is some small amount of financial aid available. Approximately 54% of UMaine graduates enter school-based practice compared to the national average of 50% according to ASHA reports. In recent years, applications to the Master's program have ranged from a high of 67 in 1999 to 49 in 2003. During that period, the average size of the admitted class was 13.4 students. Admissions to the program have averaged 49.5% of all applications, with 46% of those students admitted enrolling in the program. Comparatively, in the New England region, only 38.1% of all applicants are admitted, with 40.6 % of those admitted enrolling. Nationally, 43% of all applicants are admitted, with 56.1% enrolling. Incidentally, the number of part-time students pursuing the master's is almost negligible in recent years. The program requires two years of full time study to complete. (Appendix F)
2. The equivalent to the Master's degree. This pathway requires 30 semester credit hours of designated course work in the field, including three semester credit hours of clinical practicum, which involves direct client contact under supervision in a clinical setting. In some cases, the University of New Hampshire has provided a three-semester credit hour clinical practicum registration to individuals in Maine who have completed graduate coursework, but have no

supervised clinical practicum. This offering has been the result of collaboration between the Maine DOE and UNH. While the UNH program or a similar model may be critical to retaining in the schools those who wish to pursue certification in this manner, it is important to consider that students receive reduced clinical experience (limited to their own caseloads), no direct supervision of their work, and minimal contact with an experienced supervisor.

3. The Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC). This is the only Speech-Language Pathology Assistants Associate's degree in Maine. The program requires 39 semester hours of course credit along with 95 clock hours of clinical practicum. The program has been in existence since 1992. The current enrollment is 43, and there have been 34 graduates since the inception of the program. It is funded, in part, by a Targeted Needs Grant from the DOE, which is due to expire in June 2004.
4. The University of Cincinnati (UC) in collaboration with the DOE and the UMaine. UC has provided a Master's program via distance education in the past. UC delivered the coursework and UMaine provided the supervised clinical practicum. Two cohorts of students enrolled in the program, and 24 students have successfully completed it. UC is not offering the program at this time.

It deserves mentioning in this section that a challenge to providing the necessary education and training for licensure and/or certification in all programs is the required clinical practicum clock hours. In order to provide high quality education, training, and maintain quality of licensure and certification, it is essential that students be provided varied and meaningful clinical practicum opportunities. Clinical practica often are difficult to arrange because of the rural nature of the State of Maine, and the clinical service providers, who serve as supervisors to the students, have many demands on their time and energies, including large caseloads, paperwork, billing restrictions, etc.

RECRUITING NEW STUDENTS

There is a general and pervasive lack of awareness of the Speech-Language

Pathology field as a career path, which leads to fewer than desirable young people considering Speech-Language Pathology as an exciting, rewarding career opportunity.

The Master's program at UMaine receives an adequate number of qualified applicants to fill the available spaces, yet a number of factors impinge on the admission process and the yield from applications. In particular, the number of applications varies from year to year (67 in 1999, 49 in 2003) and the depth of the applicant pool is sometimes limited. Going much deeper into the current pool would risk compromising quality. Further, many promising applicants from the UMaine undergraduate program are recruited to attend other institutions. These are serious matters of concern and require some creative thinking and effective marketing in order to attract a larger pool of qualified applicants

In addition, we share the opinion that one of the deterrents is access to courses for the Master's degree, which is limited to one site in Maine, somewhat remote from the centers of highest population concentration. As we have already indicated, clinical practicum opportunities are limited, and resources to support external practicum supervisors are minimal.

RECRUITING FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL PRACTICE

There are a number of positive qualities in the profession that are emphasized in the recruitment efforts for public school practitioners. These include high professional satisfaction, a convenient work schedule, especially for those with young families, professional growth and development and benefits, especially health insurance and retirement. The general attractiveness of the quality of life in Maine and sense of community are cited as additional assets.

Recent surveys among practitioners nationally and in Maine reveal some of the hurdles that need to be overcome in the effort to recruit more candidates to the degree program and increase the practitioner base in the State. Leading the list is the question of compensation. 82% of Speech- Language Pathologists are compensated on the

teacher salary schedule that is collectively bargained. The average starting salary for a Master's level teacher in Maine is \$26,951, ranking 48 in the country. The average top salary is \$44,686, ranking 38th in the country. In New England the median salary for speech-language pathologists in the schools is \$50, 199. Clearly, Maine's speech-language pathologists in the schools are compensated well below the median level in New England.

Other negatives deterring entrance into public school practice include large caseloads (state regulations designate a maximum of 50 in Maine with no differentiation for severity), and multiple school building assignments with grossly inadequate space and support. This is especially true given the expanding scope of practice in the profession. The population of students served in our public schools grows ever more diverse and medically complex with the category of Multiple Disabilities designated as a rapidly growing handicapping condition. Speech-language therapy services to these individuals reach far beyond widely held misconceptions that speech-language pathologists only "fix articulation." In fact, serious and life threatening concerns are at times the responsibilities of the speech-language pathologist, especially with regard to eating and swallowing. This demanding scope of practice requires highly qualified professionals to work in the schools.

Although the DOE currently provides limited recruitment through attendance at the ASHA national conference, in fact, this represents a reduction in previous activities, which included sending a representative to the UMaine program to talk with students about school based practices.

RETENTION

Many of the same impediments to effective recruitment pertain to the retention of practitioners in the schools. Compensation, caseload, appropriate space and adequate support are often mentioned as reasons for leaving school-based practice. The fact that 82% of districts compensate speech-language pathologists as part of the teacher unit in collective bargaining place them in what many see as an inappropriate structure that deflates their compensation. They point out that they are not teachers; they are therapists, and their compensation competitive market is not the teaching field but the speech-language pathology field in other venues--private practice or institution-based practice in Maine and nationally.

On the positive side Maine has a well-established professional support system. The Maine Speech Language Hearing Association (MSLHA) offers high quality, affordable continuing education programs. MSLHA is one of the few state associations in the country to offer two-day conferences, twice each year, with nationally known speakers on a variety of relevant topics for professionals. MSLHA also partnered with DOE in September 2002, to bring a conference to Maine specially addressing innovative practices and more effective practice patterns. Attending these conferences more than meets continuing education requirements for recertification and license renewal. Schools offer a favorable work schedule, diversity of caseload, and personal/programmatic adaptability. Finally, Maine is fertile soil for a "can-do," entrepreneurial individual, and it also offers a very satisfying quality of life.

In an informative interview with a practitioner who moved from school-based service to private practice, part of which includes contract work for two school districts, she listed only two positive attributes of school-based work. These were collegial work with teachers and other therapists and the favorable school year schedule. The list of disincentives was long. We offer only a few significant ones here: space (she met students in the corridor or the kitchen), resources (an obsolete computer) no funds to support professional development, paper work, having to pay her own malpractice

insurance and salary (she was emphatic in saying she was not a teacher, she was a therapist). She calculated that when she was involved in school-based service her hourly wage computed to \$11.00 per hour. She has doubled her earnings in private practice. Write that story large across the State of Maine and one has a sense of the magnitude of the issues facing the profession in the schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

We make the following recommendations, recognizing that they will require increased resources to initiate:

1. Significant attention needs to be given to acquainting the young people of the State with the opportunities for rewarding careers in this field. An effort, in concert with each district's career preparation curriculum, working under the aegis of MLR and systematic in nature, needs to be mounted to insure that, beginning at the middle school level, students are acquainted with the opportunities that exist in this field. A major learning and marketing effort is necessary here.
2. Financial incentives with a commitment to stay in school-based practice in the area for three years to encourage young people to embark on the study necessary for licensure and certification as a Speech- Language Pathologist or a Speech-Language Assistant should be provided. These would include:
 - a. Expansion of financial grant aid available to potential students.
 - b. Expansion of loan forgiveness for those who enter school-based service and complete three years.
 - c. Designation by the Department of Education of a staff person to provide special attention to attracting additional funding to the educational programs at UMaine and KVCC and to providing initial financial incentives for placement in school-based practices in the State.
 - d. School districts should be encouraged to provide financial support for individuals to pursue the registration as Speech-Language Assistants or licensure as a Speech-Language Pathologist in return for a commitment to serve in the district for a specified period. The DOE should make such financial support allowable under local entitlement funds.
3. The KVCC Associate Degree program should reapply for Targeted Needs funding which the DOE should support. The program should be made easily accessible through distance learning across the State with a goal of doubling the

number of graduates in the next five years.

4. The Communication Sciences and Disorders Department at UMaine should consider developing post-baccalaureate opportunities accessible throughout the State for students desiring to meet the requirements for registration as Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.
5. The University of Maine System (UMS) and Board of Trustees are encouraged to aggressively consider the expansion and full funding of the Master's program by employing distance learning and other electronic resources in order to offer the Master's program statewide with faculty located at both the UMaine and USM campuses. Special attention needs to be given to expanding the practicum supervision capacities in both sites. This will require significant expansion of faculty and financial resources, but it is essential to creating the practitioners who will assist ALL Maine's young people in achieving the MLR and NCLB.
6. The UMS should investigate the possibility of offering a combined B.A. and Master's degree package at both UMaine and USM. Again, through electronic delivery opportunities statewide, the focus needs to be on bringing the program to students rather than the traditional notion of students always coming to the program, whenever it is possible and educationally effective.
7. Attention must be given to setting competitive entry level compensation. We believe that, as a bare minimum, practitioners in Maine should be compensated at the median national level in order to compete in the national market. The entry level for speech-language pathologists should therefore be set between \$36,000 and \$38,000. This will require a new salary schedule within the collective bargaining agreements in order to recognize the critical difference between teachers and speech-language pathologists in terms of function and market competition. The State is urged to offer a financial incentive to attract practitioners into the most rural areas of the State where the shortages are extreme.
8. School districts should seek ways to offer an annual additional stipend for those practitioners who have national certification through the Certificate of Clinical Competence from ASHA.

9. School districts, with support from the DOE, should explore effective and imaginative ways to employ speech-language assistants with adequate supervision from certified speech-language pathologists in order to bring greater service to our young.
10. The Department of Education (DOE) should continue the practice of attending the national ASHA convention to recruit practitioners to Maine. In addition, the DOE should consider exploring more innovative practices in recruitment of speech-language pathologists into Maine. Examples might include:
 - a. Targeted national advertising of opportunities in Maine.
 - b. Development of a recruitment package of materials that includes information about a variety of work settings and highlights the special quality of life issues in Maine.
 - c. Developing cooperative recruitment approaches with employers in Maine.
 - d. Local districts keeping an inventory of existing housing to assist new hires in relocating to suitable housing.
11. In an effort to build capacity, school districts, other employment settings and the DOE should consider adopting an approach to ensure a qualified individual not hired in one setting will be referred to another work setting, in an attempt to keep that person somewhere in Maine.
12. Explore the development of a cooperative approach to recruitment by offering to:
 - a. Pay for travel expenses to an interview.
 - b. Pay for relocation expenses.
13. The DOE should work with organizations such as, local school districts, Child Development Services, the Maine Hospital Association, other employers, and Maine Speech Language Hearing Association to develop a coordinated approach in attracting interested professionals to Maine.
14. The Department of Economic Development should be encouraged to work with DOE to develop innovative approaches to marketing professional employment opportunities including speech-language pathologists in Maine. Achieving this recommendation would build Maine's intellectual capital and economic development by reducing costs associated with vacant positions, poor retention

of trained professionals, repeated recruitment costs, and use of ‘temporary agencies’.

15. The MSBE should review the state construction guidelines to ensure that adequate space for speech-language pathologists is allowable for state subsidy under the guidelines for state support.
16. The DOE and MSLHA should collaborate on the establishment of a web page to increase the awareness of the profession, assist in recruitment efforts, and advance the understanding of the speech-language pathologists’ included and work in Maine’s schools.
17. The DOE should encourage retired speech-language pathologists to return to practice, as appropriate, and to secure as mentors and supervisors of Speech-Language Assistants and students involved in practicum work in the schools.
18. The DOE should work with the legislative delegations to address increased federal funding of IDEA and the elimination of the non-supplanting/maintenance of effort stipulation currently attached to these funds.
19. The DOE should change regulatory guidelines of caseload maximums to reflect consideration of severity of need of the students.
20. The DOE should adopt a single credential that reflects entry level professional standards as described by the Board of Examiners on Speech Language Pathology and ASHA

CONCLUSION

Imagine with us for a moment a student in need of significant speech language therapy services in order to learn who resides in a district unable to find a qualified clinical practitioner. Respondents to a survey conducted by MSLHA reported that when faced with vacancies a number of “adjustments” are made that compromise the quality and level of services provided.

- 21% of the respondents reported that schools simply rewrote the Individual Education Program (IEP) to adjust it to the available services rather than the needs of students.
- The school hired people who were not qualified to offer the services needed.
- 4% informed the parents that the services were not available.
- 40% of the respondents reported that the school employed traveling therapist
- 25% continued to advertise periodically
- 53% of the respondents agreed with the statement that standards and special education services were lowered as resources became limited.

The child we asked you to imagine has no chance of achieving the MLR and the NCLB standards. That child’s school will likely appear on the AYP list during his or her time there. Most importantly, the quality of the child’s life is compromised, and his or her productivity is measurably reduced. We cannot allow that to happen in Maine!

The Department of Labor estimates that Maine will need more than 200 new practitioners for all work settings between 1998 and 2008. Add to that the accelerating rate of retirements in the next five years, and it is clear that it is past time to take dramatic action to rectify this urgent situation. The Maine Learning Results call us courageously to support ALL students in achieving high standards. NCLB underscores the same mandate. A high quality, well-trained, adequately sized school-based practitioner corps is essential to achieving that goal. We must act now to redeem our promise to our young people.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Resolve To Establish a Task Force Concerning Speech-language Pathologists

Appendix B – Membership List

Appendix C – Chapter 5, Board of Examiners on Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology

Appendix D – Teresa A. Ukrainetz and Elena F. Fresques, *“What Isn’t Language?” A Qualitative Study of the Role of the School Speech-Language Pathologist*, Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, Danvers, MA

American Speech-language-Hearing Association (2001). Roles and Responsibilities of Speech-Language Pathologists With Respect to Reading and Writing in Children and Adolescents (technical report). Rockville, MD: Author

Appendix E – Chapter 4, Section 2 Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Appendix F – M.A. Program in Communication Science and Disorders

Appendix A

RESOLVES
First Regular Session of the 121st

CHAPTER 80 S.P. 330 - L.D. 989

Resolve, To Establish a Task Force Concerning Speech-language Pathologists

Sec. 1. Task force established. Resolved: That the Task Force to Address the Shortage of Speech-Language Pathologists, referred to in this resolve as "the task force," is established; and be it further

Sec. 2. Task force membership. Resolved: That the task force consists of the following 13 members:

1. The Commissioner of Education or the commissioner's designee;
2. The Chancellor of the University of Maine System or the chancellor's designee;
3. One member representing the State Board of Education appointed by the President of the Senate upon recommendation of the Chair of the State Board of Education;
4. Four members representing the Maine Speech-Language-Hearing Association, 3 of whom are school-based, appointed by the Speaker of the House upon recommendation of the President of the Maine Speech-Language Hearing Association;
5. One member representing the Maine School Superintendents Association appointed by the President of the Senate upon recommendation of the President of the Maine School Superintendents Association;
6. One member representing the Maine School Boards Association appointed by the Speaker of the House upon recommendation of the President of the Maine School Boards Association;
7. One member representing the Maine Principals' Association appointed by the President of the Senate upon recommendation of the President of the Maine Principals' Association;
8. One member representing the Maine Association of Directors of Special Education appointed by the Speaker of the House upon recommendation of the President of the Maine Association of Directors of Special Education;
9. One member representing the University of Maine, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders appointed by the President of the Senate upon recommendation of the Chair of the University of Maine, Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders; and
10. One parent of a student receiving speech pathology services appointed by the Speaker of the House; and be it further

Sec. 3. Chair. Resolved: That the chair is selected by a vote of the task force membership at its first meeting; and be it further

Sec. 4. Appointments; convening of task force. Resolved: That all appointments must be made no later than 30 days following the effective date of this resolve. The appointing authorities shall notify the Executive Director of the Legislative Council once all appointments have been completed. Within 15 days after appointment of all members, the executive director shall call and convene the first meeting of the task force; and be it further

Sec. 5. Duties. Resolved: That the task force shall provide leadership and direction for collaborative efforts among the Department of Education, the University of Maine System and the State Board of Education to increase the number of speech-language pathologists who provide services to Maine children by:

1. Establishing a plan and schedule for the task force's work;
2. Meeting regularly to gather and review information and data on the conditions affecting recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists in Maine schools and develop recommendations for recruitment and retention of speech-language pathologists;
3. Developing a plan to support and enhance the capacity of graduate training programs at institutions that prepare speech-language pathologists and ensure adequate opportunities for professional growth and development through the University of Maine System and other public and private organizations;
4. Examining trends related to the existing vacancy rates in Maine schools of speech-language pathologists, trends in use of Medicaid funding to enhance speech-language pathology services and demographics of currently employed school-based speech-language pathologists to identify current capacity and anticipated need by 2010;
5. Reviewing current licensure requirements of speech-language pathologists and making any recommendations for revisions to such requirements in order to ensure quality of services and to increase the number of individuals qualified for licensure as speech-language pathologists; and
6. Examining the potential for assignment of certified school personnel who can provide services while being appropriately supervised by licensed speech-language pathologists; and be it further

Sec. 6. Advisory capacity. Resolved: That the task force shall serve in an advisory capacity to the Legislature and the agencies involved with the requirements, licensure and preparation of speech-language pathologists; and be it further

Sec. 7. Recommendation. Resolved: That the task force shall recommend to the Legislature, the State Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education a plan to ensure access to educational training opportunities for speech-language pathologists in postsecondary institutions; and be it further

Sec. 8. Staff assistance. Resolved: That the Department of Education shall provide necessary staffing services to the task force; and be it further

Sec. 9. Compensation. Resolved: That the public members of the task force not otherwise compensated by their employers or other entities that they represent are entitled to receive reimbursement of necessary expenses and, upon a demonstration of financial hardship, a per diem equal to the legislative per diem as defined in the Maine Revised Statutes, Title 3, section 2 for their attendance at authorized meetings of the task force; and be it further

Sec. 10. Report. Resolved: That the task force shall submit a report that includes its findings and recommendations, including suggested legislation, to the Second Regular Session of the 121st Legislature, to the Commissioner of Education and to the State Board of Education by December 3, 2003. Following review of the report, the Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs may report out a bill to the Second Regular Session of the 121st Legislature; and be it further

Sec. 11. Task force budget. Resolved: That expenses incurred by the task force in completing its work must be absorbed by the respective agencies and entities represented on the task force.

Effective September 13, 2003, unless otherwise indicated.

Appendix B

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Appendix C

Note: four pages

Appendix D

Appendix E

Section 2. SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY ASSISTANTS

A. Application for Registration

Licensed Speech-Language Pathologists may obtain application material for the registration of a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant from the Board Clerk.

Completed application forms must be submitted for Board approval prior to the date of first employment of the Assistant under the supervision of the registering professional.

B. Eligibility for Registration

Minimum requirements for registration as a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant are:

1. An associate's degree in the field of communication disorders, or an associate's degree substantially equivalent to the following course distribution:

Course	Credit Hours
English Composition/Grammar	6
Math	3
Psychology/Sociology/Multicultural Studies (some combination)	9
Phonetics	3
Human Anatomy and Physiology	6
Survey of Disabilities	3
Normal Speech, Language and Hearing Development across the Life Span	3
Articulation Disorders and Rehabilitation	3
Language Disorders and Rehabilitation	3
Clinical Methods/Procedures	3
Introduction to Audiology/Aural Rehabilitation	3
Elective	3
Clock Hours	
Practicum 1: Observation	15

Practicum 2: Pediatric	40
Practicum 3: Adult	40

2. An applicant who has satisfied all the requirements of paragraph 1 above, except for Practicum 1, 2 or 3, may meet the practicum requirement by satisfying one of the following options:
 - a. Option 1 – Completion of a practicum from a regionally-accredited training program which includes, at a minimum, ninety-five (95) hours distributed as follows:

Practicum 1: 15 hours observation;
Practicum 2: 40 hours pediatric; and
Practicum 3: 40 hours adults
 - b. Option 2 – Completion of the experience for Practicum 1, 2 or 3 while working as a registered Speech-Language Pathology Aide. The aide gains experience in accordance with the requirements and restrictions of section 1(F) above under the supervision of a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist who has had at least two (2) years of postgraduate professional experience and ten (10) hours training in the supervisory process approved by the Board. The supervising Speech-Language Pathologist shall attest to the supervised experience on a form to be provided by the Board.

[Note: Option 2 will be unavailable after January 1, 2005. See §1(C) above.]

C. Registration Requirements and Restrictions

1. Assistants must be registered with the Board by their supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
2. Only individuals with a permanent license and not fewer than 2 years of post graduate professional experience and 10 hours of Board-approved training in “the supervisory process” may register and supervise Speech-Language Pathology Assistants.
3. Individual Speech-Language Pathology Assistants may be registered by only one licensed Speech-Language Pathologist.
4. A maximum number of 2 Speech-Language Pathology Assistants may be registered by a licensed Speech-Language Pathologist.

5. Supervising Speech-Language Pathologists are totally responsible for the services provided by their Speech-Language Assistants.
6. The registering professional must report in writing to the Board discontinuance of supervision of a registered Assistant within 30 days of the discontinuance.
7. At the time of license renewal, licensees are to list the names of Assistants registered to them.
8. When Speech-Language Pathology Assistants are providing direct services under the licensed supervisor, the supervisor is responsible for so informing, in writing, all clients (or their legal guardians), referring agencies and payers for service. The Speech-Language Pathology Assistant should be identified as a service provider in written plans of care, Individual Education Plans (IEP), and Individual Family Services Plans (IFSP). All clients shall be provided with a written copy of paragraphs E and F below, describing the “Scope of Responsibilities for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants” and the “Exclusive Responsibilities of the Speech-Language Pathologist,” respectively.

D. Supervision Requirements

1. For the first ninety (90) work days following registration:
 - a. The licensed Speech-Language Pathologist who registered the Assistant shall provide the Assistant with at least 30% direct and *indirect supervision* overall.
 - b. *Direct supervision* of student/client care shall be required no less than 20% of the Assistant’s actual student/client contact time weekly.
2. After the first ninety (90) work days following registration:
 - a. The licensed Speech-Language Pathologist who registered the Assistant shall provide the Assistant with at least 20% direct and indirect supervision overall.
 - b. Direct supervision of student/client care shall be required no less than 10% of the Assistant’s actual student/client contact time weekly.

Supervision schedules must allow for this supervision to be proportionate to the caseload served by the assistant.

3. Documentation

Supervision provided pursuant to paragraphs 1 and 2 above shall be documented as follows:

- a. The actual hours of supervision and the proportionality relative to the caseload shall be compiled on forms provided by the board.
- b. The content of the supervisory activity should provide information about the quality of the speech-language pathology assistant's performance of assigned tasks and should verify that the clinical activity is limited to tasks specified in the speech-language pathology assistant's scope of responsibilities. Information obtained during direct supervision should include data relative to:
 - (1) Agreement (reliability) between the assistant and the supervisor on correct/incorrect recording of target behavior;
 - (2) Accuracy in implementation of screening and treatment procedures;
 - (3) Accuracy in recording data; and
 - (4) Ability to interact effectively with the patient/client.

The Board may perform an audit of supervision programs to assure compliance with these rules.

- 4. The supervising professional must be on-site or accessible by telecommunications at all times when the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant is providing client care.

E. Scope of Responsibilities for Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

- 1. Provided that the training, supervision, documentation and planning are appropriate, the following tasks may be delegated to a Speech-Language Pathology Assistant:
 - a. Conducting speech-language screenings (without interpretation) following specified screening protocols developed by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.

- b. Providing direct treatment assistance to clients identified by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - c. Following documented treatment plans or protocols developed by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - d. Documenting client progress toward meeting established objectives as stated in the treatment plan, and report this information to the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - e. Assisting the Speech-Language Pathologist during assessment of clients, such as those who are difficult to test.
 - f. Assisting with informal documentation (e.g. tallying notes for the Speech-Language Pathologist to use), prepare materials, and assist with other clerical duties as directed by the Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - g. Scheduling activities, prepare charts, records, graphs, or otherwise display data.
 - h. Performing checks and maintenance of equipment.
 - i. Participating with the Speech-Language Pathologist in research projects, in-service training and public relations programs.
2. A Speech-Language Pathology Assistant may not:
- a. Perform standardized or nonstandardized diagnostic tests, formal or informal evaluations or interpret test results.
 - b. Participate in parent conferences, case conferences, or any interdisciplinary team without the presence of the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
 - c. Provide client or family counseling.
 - d. Write, develop, or modify a client's individualized treatment plan in any way.
 - e. Assist with clients without following the individualized treatment plan prepared by the Speech-Language Pathologist or without access to supervision.
 - f. Sign any formal documents (e.g. treatment plans, reimbursement forms, or reports). The Assistant should sign or initial informal

treatment notes for review and co-signature by the supervising professional.

- g. Select clients for services.
- h. Discharge a client from services.
- i. Disclose clinical or confidential information, either orally or in writing, to anyone not designated by the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
- j. Make referrals for additional services.
- k. Communicate with the client, family, or others regarding any aspect of the client's status without the specific consent of the supervising Speech-Language Pathologist.
- l. Represent himself/herself as a Speech-Language Pathologist.

F. Exclusive Responsibilities of the Speech-Language Pathologist

- 1. Documenting the pre-service training, competencies and credentials of the Assistant.
- 2. Informing patients/clients and families about the level (professional vs. support personnel), frequency, and duration of services as well as supervision.
- 3. Representing the Speech-Language Pathology Team in all collaborative, inter-professional, interagency meetings, correspondence and reports. This would not preclude the Assistant from attending meetings along with the Speech-Language Pathologist as a team member or drafting correspondence and reports for editing, approval and signature by the Speech-Language Pathologist.
- 4. Making all clinical decisions, including determining patient/client selection for inclusion/exclusion in the caseload and dismissing patients/clients from treatment.
- 5. Communicating with patients/ clients, parents and family members about diagnosis, prognosis and treatment plan.
- 6. Conducting diagnostic evaluations, assessments or appraisals, and interpreting obtained data in reports.
- 7. Reviewing each treatment plan with the Assistant at least weekly.

8. Delegating specific tasks to the Assistant while retaining legal and ethical responsibility for all patient/client services provided or omitted.
 9. Preparing an individualized treatment plan and making modifications prior to, or during, implementation.
 10. Discussing the case with, or referring the patient/client to, other professionals.
 11. Signing all formal documents (e.g. treatment plans, reimbursement forms, reports). The supervisor should indicate on the documents that the Assistant performed certain activities.
 12. Reviewing and signing all informal progress notes prepared by the Assistant.
 13. Providing ongoing training to the Assistant on the job.
 14. Ensuring that the Assistant only performs tasks within the scope of responsibility of the Speech-Language Pathology Assistant.
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STATUTORY AUTHORITY: 32 MRSA §§6003(7) and (7-A), 6004 (2) and (3), 6013, 6020-A(2)

EFFECTIVE DATE:

April 29, 1998 - as "Scope of Practice"

NON-SUBSTANTIVE CORRECTIONS:

June 17, 1998 - minor spelling and formatting; insertion of missing "seek" in Code of Ethics (L)

REPEALED AND REPLACED:

March 5, 2001 - as "The Registration and Use of Speech-Language Pathology Aides and Speech-Language Pathology Assistants by Board Licensed Speech-Language Pathologists" (replaces former Chapter 3; former subject matter of Chapter 4 moved to new Chapters 5 and 6)

Appendix F

M.A. program in Communication Sciences and Disorders
University of Maine
Data prepared for Legislative Task Force Concerning Speech-Language Pathologists
January 2004

Current Status

- 4 full time tenure track Ph.D. faculty (salaries fully funded)
- 1 tenure track faculty on partial retirement (salary line with Provost, retires in 2007)
- 4 ½ clinical faculty (2 salaries fully funded, 2 ½ on soft money)

B.A. Program

- Average 17 graduates/year
- 60% enter graduate programs in Speech-Language Pathology or Audiology
- Current enrollment: 90 majors

M.A. Program

- Average 17 graduates/year (New England region average=16.5; National average=12.6)
- Average 88% from Maine
- 54% work in schools after graduation
- Current enrollment: 31
- Average 49.5% of all applications admitted (New England region average=38.1%; National average=43%)
- Average 46% of students admitted enroll in program (New England region average=40.6%; National average=56.1%)
- Average 57.8% of students in graduate program are from UMaine (New England region average=14.3%; National average=38.3%)
- Average 4.7% of students in graduate program from out of state (New England region average=31%; National average=21.1%)